LABOUR MONTHLY

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BOOK REVIEWS

DEATH TO FASCISM

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DECEMBER 1943

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Towards the Final Battles—Three-Power Conference—Munich Reversed—"Utter Destruction" of Fascism—From Quebec to Moscow—Fascist Manoeuvres—Disruptive Intrigues—A Blast of Fresh Air—Democratic Victory—Fulfilling the Decisions—Military Measures—Second Front When?—Sharpen the Campaign—Political Decisions—Fight for Fulfilment—Mosley Test Issue—Four-Power Declarations—World War 3 or World Peace? Why the League Collapsed—The New Perspective—Hastening Victory.

THE final phase of the war against Fascism in Europe now draws close. The political successes of the Three-Power Conference, alongside the military successes of Allied arms, have strengthened all the favourable conditions for the supreme assault on the Nazi citadel and the complete destruction of Fascism. Everything must now be directed to this task. Neither the military achievement of the Red Army advance, nor the strengthened weight of Anglo-American air bombing, nor the signs of cracking within the camp of the Axis satellites and even within Nazi Germany, nor the glorious political perspective opened out by the Three-Power Conference decisions, nor the vast new problems of the world after the war which are already looming large, must for one moment blind us to this primary task of the decisive battle which is now before us. Fascism shall not escape. The hour of the vengeance of the peoples is at hand. Fascism is surrounded, weakened, outnumbered, out-gunned and out-manned; but Fascism is not yet broken, has not yet played its last cards of political manoeuvre, has still to loose its last fury of dying terror; Fascism has still to be finally beaten, smashed and destroyed, so that it shall never rise again. The final battles are indeed at last coming into view: but, as every responsible leader of the United Nations has given warning, we must be prepared for the prospect that the final battles may prove the heaviest, demanding the uttermost relentless determination to ensure that neither delay nor weakening shall rob mankind of the fullness of victory.

IN this perspective the Three-Power Conference represents a landmark of the United Nations, comparable in significance with the formation of the alliance. The signal of the Three-Power Conference is the death-signal for Fascism. Its decisions have barred the political bolt-holes of escape which the friends of the monster were (and still are) working deviously to open. They have drawn close the bonds of the alliance which the rats and vermin were (and still are) gnawing to undermine. The watchword of the Three-Power Conference is the watchword to strengthen the blows against Fascism, to consolidate the alliance, to combine the strategy, to hasten the ending of the war, to show no mercy to the Fascist enemy, to ensure the victory of democracy and of the freedom of nations, and to lay the foundations for the organisation of world peace. The decisions of the Three-Power Conference represent a victory for democracy, for the peoples, for the common man; and a defeat for Fascism, for the Fifth Column, for the enemies of the people. No international conference of modern times has been so fruitful, so positive, so concrete and so constructive in its outcome.

TWELVE years have passed since the first warning guns sounded the onset of the second world war, when the Japanese generals let loose pillage and murder in Manchuria, and the Western Powers began the repudiation of the League of Nations Covenant, under the guidance of a Simon and with the applause of an Amery, to leave the Chinese

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people to their fate. Ten years have passed since Hitler came to power, to be courted and fawned on by the statesmen and financiers of the West, who fell over themselves to help to build his armaments which have since laid waste the world. Seven years have passed since German and Italian Fascism, made insolent by success, turned their guns and their planes on Spanish Democracy, while the Pharisees of the West deprived Spanish Democracy of arms under the hypocritical shibboleth of "non-intervention." Five years have passed since the nethermost depth of Western statesmanship was plumbed at Munich, when the Four-Power Pact of Britain, France, Nazi Germany and Italian Fascism, was signed in the blood of dismembered Czechoslovakia, while the Soviet Union was excluded from their guilty councils.

WHAT a change to-day! The Three-Power Conference at Moscow represents the completion of the reversal of Munich. Only five years ago the representatives of Anglo-French reaction and of German and Italian Fascism met in the Nazi council-chambers of Munich to close the doors against the Soviet Union and to open the gates to war. For five years mankind has paid the penalty in torrents of blood and destruction and enslavement without equal in all the records of the nations. To-day accredited delegates of the Governments of Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union, representing the mighty array of States and nations embattled against Fascism, have met in the halls of the Kremlin and the people's citadel of Moscow to pledge their word and deed in support of "the fundamental principle that Fascism and all its evil influence and emanations shall be utterly destroyed." Through all the blood and tears and suffering, which have had to expiate past crimes, the wheel of history has indeed turned to some purpose.

THE Three-Power Conference came at the right moment. The turn of the tide of the war, the extending military successes of the Allies, and the prospect of the final downfall of Fascism made essential a Conference to prepare the necessary combined strategy for victory and to agree on a common policy in answer to the new political problems which the advance of the Allied armies and the prospect of victory had brought into view. The unity of the alliance, which had been forged under the overmastering compulsion of common peril, needed now to be carried forward to a unity for victory and for the positive achievement of common democratic aims. This task was no light one. Quebec and the sequel to Quebec had shown how grave was the danger of a continued separation of strategic planning and political approach. Events preceding the Conference underlined these dangers and the paramount necessity of a solution.

FASCISM, driven back in the field of battle, and faced with the overwhelming superiority of the United Nations, openly calculated on divergences in the alliance for its salvation. Nor was there lack of soil for the manoeuvres of the enemy. Powerful reactionary forces, the old isolationists and backers of Fascism, which had been acquiescent in the alliance during the moment of extreme military danger, and had been quiescent so long as the Nazi armies were advancing into the Soviet Union, now began to come out of their holes and resume their disruptive activities, as soon as the tide of the war had begun to turn, the menace of military defeat had receded into the distance, and the Red Army was advancing.

THUS, alongside and even because of the Allied military successes and the increasingly favourable conditions for final victory, with the consequent practical problems which required urgent

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attention, there was plenty of poison in the air which needed to be cleared. The Three-Power Conference tackled its task faithfully in consolidating the unity of the alliance against every disruptive force; and the world stands in debt to all the three statesmen and their Governments who made this success possible. Against all the poisonous and disruptive tendencies the Three-Power Conference came like a blast of fresh air. Its outcome represented a victory against Fascism not less significant than a major victory on the battlefield. It brought discomfiture to the enemies of democratic victory, and renewed confidence and determination to all democrats and anti-Fascists. Much requires to be done to bring its decisions into practice, and to carry them forward; but a foundation has been laid.

FROM the outset, every attempt was made by hostile forces to hinder, delay or sabotage the Conference, to diminish its importance or restrict it to an impotent exploratory role before the meeting of the three Heads of Government; or to restrict its agenda. These attempts were defeated by the proceedings of the Conference. To the discomfiture of the advocates of its exploratory role, the Conference adopted definite and binding decisions on a series of important questions, which not only provide a valuable preliminary starting-point for any future meeting of the Heads of Government, but already constitute a whole in themselves and a guide to action.

TO the discomfiture of the mischief-makers, who sought to turn the agenda of the Conference to their points of would-be provocation about Poland or Finland or the Baltic peoples or the frontiers of the Soviet Union, the Conference in its decisions firmly concentrated its attention on the tasks of the war against Fascism and for democratic victory. To the discomfiture of the advocates of the "long, long war," the Conference came down explicitly and unequivocally for the shortening of the war by the closest combined military operations. To the discomfiture of the anti-democratic intriguers and devisers of reactionary strait-jackets for the European peoples, the Conference laid down the most precise directions for the fullest democratic anti-Fascist development in all occupied countries even during military operations. To the discomfiture of the Isolationists, Munichites, despisers of collective security or advocates of an Isolationist Anglo-American Alliance, the Four-Power Declaration of the Conference pledged the joint leadership of Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States and China in establishing an international organisation of all peace-loving States, great or small, for international collaboration and the maintenance of peace.

ALL these represent important democratic victories on vital issues. The reception of the decisions is not less significant. They have received universal acclamation from all democratic opinion. They have been denounced by the Nazi press, which banked on a negative outcome for the Conference. Hitler's subsequent speech, with its frantic proclamation of resistance to the last ("we shall never capitulate") revealed the consciousness of the blow which the Conference had dealt to the hopes of a way out through political manoeuvres or division of the allies. Within the camp of the United Nations the only voice of criticism so far has come from relatively restricted quarters of the most extreme reactionaries, Isolationists, Munichites, elements of the Catholic hierarchy in the United States or similar groupings. It was noted that, amid the universal acclamation, the financial speculators on the Stock Exchange and Wall Street slumped on receipt of the news of the Moscow Conference decisions; while in the debate

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in Parliament the only opposition was expressed by the Munichite I.L.P., which had acclaimed Munich and Chamberlain with fervent adulation ("well done, thou good and faithful servant"), and now denounced the Moscow Conference decisions with corresponding emphasis ("there was no reason why the House should throw their hats in the air").

WHAT of the future? It is not enough to acclaim the decisions of the Moscow Conference; it is necessary to ensure their fulfilment in action. Recent developments in this country, such as the release of Mosley or the reconstruction of the Government with the inclusion of the pro-Franco Lennox-Boyd, or the revival of Fascist activity in Allied-occupied territory in Italy, or the exacerbation of the Lebanon crisis, illustrate how active the enemy manoeuvres continue, and how necessary it is to combat them. The fight for the principles adopted by the three Governments at Moscow has still to be carried through to completion.

THE decisions of the Moscow Conference are analysed in detail in a special article in this issue, and their significance explained. These decisions need to be made familiar to the widest sections of the people; for they place the most powerful weapons in the hands of all supporters of democratic victory. But these weapons need to be used. What is especially important for present purposes is to emphasise the significance of the main decisions as a guide to action on present issues, as well as for the whole future perspective.

THE principal question before the Moscow Conference was that of military action for speedy victory. On this all else depends. Here it is essential to be clear what was decided, and what remains to be done. The wording of the public statement is exact and precise:—

> In the first place, there were frank and exhaustive discussions of the measures to be taken to shorten the war against Germany and her satellites in Europe.
>
> Advantage was taken of the presence of military advisers, representing their respective chiefs of staff, in order to discuss definite military operations with regard to which decisions had been taken and which are already being prepared in order to create a basis for the closest military co-operation in the future between the three countries.

Here every word has its weight. "First place" was given to the military discussions. Common ground was the aim "to shorten the war against Germany and her satellites in Europe" by "closest military co-operation in the future" ("in the future"—that is, not already existing).

DOES this mean that agreement was reached on the "measures to be taken to shorten the war," on the "definite military operations"? Here there were "frank and exhaustive discussions." Previously determined plans of operations, "with regard to which decisions had been taken," were reported and discussed. There is no record of agreement being reached on the basis of these plans, or an agreed common plan having been reached at the Conference. On every other declaration of the Conference agreement is specifically recorded: "the three Governments are in complete agreement" (Declaration on Italy), "have agreed" (Declaration on Austria), etc. The conclusion is clear. The fight for a united strategy was carried an enormous stage forward by the Moscow Conference, with the frank and exhaustive interchange of the responsible Government representatives and military experts. But it has still to be carried through to completion. The responsibility to ensure that our Government and the United States Government take with all speed the necessary "measures to shorten the war," in accordance with the aims agreed in principle at the Moscow Conference, rests with the

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peoples of this country and the United States.

WITH this must be taken the declarations in the speeches of Stalin and Churchill immediately following the Conference. Stalin stated in his anniversary speech:—

> The opening of a real Second Front in Europe, which is not far off, will considerably hasten victory over Hitlerite Germany and still further consolidate the comradeship-in-arms of the Allied countries

Churchill stated in his Mansion House speech on November 9:—

> 1944 will see the climax of the European war. . . . The campaign of 1944 in Europe will be the most severe and, to the Western Allies, the most costly in life of any we have yet fought. . . . Battles far larger and more costly than Waterloo or Gettysburg will be fought.

To these declarations should be added the statement of Cordell Hull immediately following the Moscow Conference:—

> In the military field decisions which may from time to time be improved had already been adopted.

IT is essential that the present stage of the fight for the Second Front should be firmly grasped in the light of these statements. Do they warrant the conclusion that the issue of the Second Front may now be regarded as decided as a result of the Moscow Conference, and that the campaign for the speediest opening of the Second Front may now be regarded as unnecessary? On the contrary. The aim of the Second Front in Western Europe is agreed in principle. This was already proclaimed by the Prime Minister in his speech in Parliament in September, and in General Smuts's speech. Preparations for the Second Front are in hand. The Second Front is on the way, is drawing nearer, is "not far off." But how near? In one month? In three months? In six months? Or later? *The question is not whether the Second Front will be opened, but when*? That is the crucial question on which the future depends. Are the preparations in hand being hastened to coincide with the present Soviet offensive? Or are the old time-tables dragging on (with even the possibility of new delays through the retardation of the advance in Italy or the setbacks in the Dodecanese? Here there is no room for optimistic assumptions or credulous illusions. Hull's statement implies that the old time-tables, the old decisions which "had already been adopted" still hold, but "may be improved." It is for the mass campaign to see that they are "improved."

THE answer to this crucial question depends, above all, on the strength of the popular campaign in this country. Only the most intensive democratic campaign for the speeding up of the Second Front can defeat the powerful political reactionary forces which are obstructing it, and which can no longer even attempt to conceal their political opposition behind technical arguments. We cannot afford to forget that the far more explicit pledge of the early summer of 1942, recognising the urgency of the establishment of the Second Front in Europe in 1942, was overridden and still remains unfulfilled. So far as the technical factors are concerned, the report of the United States Senate Sub-Committee on War Mobilisation in October revealed, on official expert authority, that it would be possible "to deliver a decisive blow to Europe this year" and establish a Second Front in Europe with 160 divisions before Christmas. The crucial question is the political question.

IN this connection it is important to recognise that authoritative American press expression, as of the *New York Times*, has now stated that expert military authority has declared for the immediate opening of the Second Front, and that the opposition is, as they claim, a British *political* opposition. The military correspondent of the *New York Times*, Hanson Baldwin, has affirmed that American military opinion "has long agreed with the Russian contention that a cross-

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channel invasion is the best way to victory":—

> Most American military thought seems to agree that the Channel invasion is the quickest and surest way to win the war in Europe. But the British have not agreed with this theory. . . . Political factors and post-war nationalistic aspirations complicate the judgment of military strategy. —(*New York Times*, September 19, 1943.)

This indicates how important it is to strengthen the campaign in this country.

IT is of parallel importance to fight for the fulfilment of the political decisions of the Three-Power Conference. The second main field of decisions of the Conference laid down the lines of the necessary political steps to ensure the victory of democracy and the destruction of Fascism. The broad principles of the Atlantic Charter are here brought down to earth and given flesh and blood in daily practice. For the first time in any official document of the United Nations the aim of the "utter destruction of Fascism and all its evil influence and emanations" is definitely laid down and agreed. The Declaration on Italy has a significance reaching far beyond Italy. Not only is the principle laid down, but precise and concrete measures are fixed for its fulfilment. The "utter destruction" of Fascism means the "suppression" of "all institutions and organisations created by the Fascist regime" (not only the Fascist Party). It means the "removal" of "all Fascist or pro-Fascist elements" from "administration and from institutions and organisations of a public character." The Fascist war criminals are to be "brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the peoples whom they have outraged." These decisions place powerful levers in the hands of the peoples for the extermination of Fascism. No less precise are the indications for democratic anti-Fascist development even during military operations: the release of anti-Fascist prisoners; freedom of speech, assembly and organisation; democratic organs of local government; and drawing of representatives with consistent anti-Fascist records into the Government.

BUT the effectiveness of these decisions requires the activity of the democratic movement in this country to ensure their fulfilment. We cannot be satisfied that the preliminary declaration of the Commander-in-Chief in Italy, with regard to the functions of the Allied Control Commission and the continuance of the machinery of Amgot under the revised short title of A.M.G., or the reorganisation by Badoglio of his Government on a "technical" basis without the participation of the anti-Fascist representatives, yet come anywhere near the fulfilment of the decisions of the Moscow Conference. The Declaration on the independence of Austria closes the door, not only on Pan-German aims of Greater Germany, but equally on other reactionary schemes for the restoration of Austria-Hungary or other reactionary *blocs* or federations in Central and Eastern Europe; but these schemes are still being peddled around. The Italian Advisory Commission has not yet met. The European Advisory Commission has not yet met. There is still plenty of need for pressure. Nor can we forget our special responsibility in this country to insist that, if the British Government has agreed to these principles of democratic anti-Fascist liberation (release of anti-Fascist prisoners; freedom of speech, press and assembly; constitution of a National Government based on democratic anti-Fascist representatives) for enemy-occupied territory in Italy, these principles should apply with all the more force in India.

IN glaring contrast to the decisions of the Three-Power Conference is the action of the Government in releasing Sir Oswald Mosley — the "English gentleman conscious of the call of Germanic blood," in the words of the Nazi radio hailing and applauding Mr. Morri-

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son's action. This is a political act of major significance, not only for Britain, but for the whole war front, and has been immediately taken as such by Hitler, Mussolini, Laval and every Quisling. The transparent alibi of "medical" grounds, on the basis of a many-years-old complaint, requiring rest, not motion, would not deceive an infant. Was Gandhi released when he was at death's door? Did they release the wounded and dying Connolly? They tied him to a chair to shoot him. Did Beckett suffer from phlebitis? Did Admiral Sir Barry Domville suffer from weak legs? Was Captain Canning a martyr to piles? The steady succession of releases of leading Fascists and pro-Fascists, whom even Sir John Anderson interned, and whom Mr. Herbert Morrison has set free, has proceeded in a continuous progression over many months from the lesser figures to the big shots, and finally to the head of the Fascist conspiracy, the close associate of Hitler and Mussolini. The release of all these is in fact a political decision. And it must be remembered that Fascism still represents the reserve weapon of reaction in this country in preparation for after the war—unless the people take the opportunity now to smash and destroy the beast, and compel the Government to act.

THE release of Hitler in 1924 from his luxurious detention—under the same pleas that Hitler was "no longer important," " not a danger "—has cost millions of lives for Germany and the world. Would it not have been better for the world if Hitler had been shot in 1924—as the Soviet Union showed how to deal with the Fifth Column in its trials, which have been worth many military victories for the United Nations. But even that release was in peacetime. This release is in the midst of war against Fascism, immediately after a sacred pledge by the Government to deal with "Fascists and pro-Fascists" without mercy. This is an outrage. Why should the ignominious path of the Weimar Republic be slavishly followed in this country? Is it conceivable that after the accursed example of German Social Democracy right up to the end of 1932 and even the beginning of 1933 pooh-poohing the Communist warnings and appeals and declaring that Hitler was no danger, now on November 19, 1943, the *Daily Herald* can placidly declare once more that British Fascism "is no danger and will never rise again." Have Mr. Herbert Morrison and Miss Ellen Wilkinson no higher ambition than to imitate faithfully the feeblest and most despised figures of political history, the Social Democratic Ministers of the Weimar Republic—fierce only against working-class unity, and tolerant to home - grown Fascists? The entire Government is on trial before the nation on this issue. It is for the War Cabinet to understand the seriousness of the feeling aroused. The formidable storm of protest aroused by this action is testimony of the health of public opinion, which is well in advance of the Government Ministers who seek to lecture it, as well as of the press, and has made this a test issue for the seriousness of the Government's fight against Fascism and the fulfilment of the Three-Power Conference decisions.

FINALLY, the most far-reaching long-term decisions of the Three-Power Conference turn on the organisation of world-peace and international collaboration after the war. The decisions here reached have the most important bearing on present policy and the future perspective. As the prospect of victory draws closer, so the questions of future world organisation and the maintenance of peace loom large. Fears for the future and gloomy prophecies of "World War No. 3" are already widely expressed. Memories of the sequel to the last war; the promises of world organisation ar

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peace through collective security; the formation of the League of Nations and its collapse in the face of Fascist aggression, and the consequent transition to the second world war, deeply colour present thought. It is therefore especially important to make understood the significance of the decisions now reached, and the new perspective which they hold out, placing within our grasp a very different line of development from that which characterised the years from the first to the second world war.

IS it possible to organise international collaboration and the maintenance of peace in the world after the war, and after the defeat of Fascism, and to prevent renewed world war, in the face of the very great differences of social and political systems between the different countries of the United Nations, and the inevitable conflicts of imperialist interests? The achievement of this aim depends on carrying forward the collaboration of the United Nations, under the leadership of the principal Powers of the alliance, in the tasks of reconstruction and in the world after the war. Socialists are well aware that there can be no automatic guarantee of peace in the existing unstable social order over the world, that is, while capitalism survives. But it is of paramount urgency that the democratic peoples of the world should unite their efforts to hold war in check, pending the advance to a more harmonious social order, that is, to world socialism, which can alone finally eliminate the causes of war. The accomplishment of this task, which is expressed in the conception of collective security, depends, not primarily on legal forms or paper constitutions, but on the united will and action of the peoples of the world, and decisively of the leading democratic peoples, representing the main centres of world-power. The existence of the alliance of the United Nations, and the complete destruction of Fascism, for the first time establishes the conditions for the accomplishment of this task.

WHY did the League of Nations fail? The League of Nations failed, not because it attempted to organise collective security, but because it was not such "a general international organisation" contemplated in the Four-Power Declaration, and did not include the leading World Powers. At the outset it excluded the Soviet Union and failed to win the adherence of the United States, thus failing to include the two largest World Powers. Hence it was at the outset a sectional organisation, a limited instrument of Anglo-French domination in Europe and an anti-Soviet instrument. When in the later years of developing Fascist aggression the attempt was made to use it as an instrument for collective security, and the Soviet Union joined it for that purpose, the reactionary pro-Fascist policy at that time of the two Western European Powers dominating its councils paralysed its action and led to its collapse.

NOW for the first time the Four-Power Declaration of Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States and China provides the pledge of collaboration of the four principal World Powers, after the destruction of Fascism, assuming the responsibility of joint leadership in the establishment of a general international organisation of all peace-loving States. For the quarter of a century between the two world wars the deep division between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers, fostered by reaction in the West, constituted the fundamental antagonism of world politics, and on the basis of this antagonism Fascism was enabled to climb to power. The co-operation of the Western Powers and the Soviet Union is the key to world peace. This co-operation has at last been established in the Alliance of the United Nations.

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Its continuance after the war is the key to the problems of world politics after the war. The British-Soviet Twenty Years Treaty of Alliance represents the foundation stone for this co-operation. The Four-Power Declaration represents the second great landmark on the road. If we carry forward this line of development, on the basis of the unity and strength of the democratic forces defeating all reactionary attempts to disrupt it, then indeed the way is opened to the organisation of stable peace and security after the war, and to rapid democratic advance in the common tasks of reconstruction and in the building of a new world.

THESE are the great perspectives which the Moscow Conference decisions hold out. But their realisation depends on our present action. They depend, above all, on present effective military action for the speedy defeat of Fascism. They depend on mobilising all forces for the struggle and defeating every reactionary attempt to save Fascism. Serious warning must be taken from such signs, after the Moscow Conference, as the release of Mosley, or the reconstruction of the Government in a way that, in place of removing the Munichite or anti-Soviet reactionaries, actually tilts the balance further in an unfavourable direction. No less serious warning must be taken from the military situation revealed in Italy and the Dodecanese, with the inevitable consequences, as warned by advocates of the Second Front, of delay of the Second Front and selection of illusory alternatives in preference, and with the further consequence of having made possible, by the withdrawal of divisions from Italy and Western Europe, the renewed Nazi counter-offensive in the East. All these dangerous tendencies in the situation need speedy correction. The primary immediate task now is to hasten by all means in our power the advance to the final combined offensive and the final victorious battle against Fascism, in order to go forward to the further great aims which are indicated in the Moscow Conference decisions, and in order to go forward to the aims of full democratic and social liberation which constitute the goal of the working-class movement.

R. P. D.

November 21, 1943.

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Here are some chance extracts from Reports. Other Groups please emulate these examples.

Darlington.—*Our winter meetings are going to take place every Tuesday night in* the Temperance Institute. They will take the form of discussions on your guide and other subjects carefully blended.

An L.M.S. Group.—Twenty present at last meeting—all of them active in outside organisations.

A Newspaper Group (London).—Twenty-two present at last meeting, seven being newcomers. Ten shillings collected for L.M. Development Fund. Discussion on Hot Springs Conference, with special speaker.

Hyde.—Regularly meeting. £1 16s. collected at last one for L.M.

Skegness.—Meets every month. Eleven present at last meeting, two being newcomers. 3s. 2d. collected for L.M.

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The Moscow Conference

by QUAESTOR

THE decisions of the Three-Power Conference are printed elsewhere in this issue, because they deserve more close and deliberate study than they could possibly receive when they appeared in the newspapers. Here only a summary of their outstandingly significant features can be attempted.

Principal of these is the great further series of steps which they proclaim or imply, towards the defeat of Hitlerite Germany and the triumph of the freedom-loving peoples.

Last month we pointed out that the anti-Hitler coalition of freedom-loving peoples had at the Conference the chance of laying down long-term policies for collaboration in reconstruction and peace—policies which required, as a preliminary, a resolute decision to shorten the war to-day by fullest military collaboration. No one can tell, outside the highest military authorities of the three States, in what concrete forms collaboration was foreseen at the Moscow Conference. It is certain that, while the general communique of November 1 spoke of *decisions* in regard to a number of questions, it only referred to *discussions* in the sphere of measures to be taken to shorten the war, particularly of "definite military operations with regard to which decisions had been taken." Thus it is hardly probable that agreement was reached with regard to the Second Front in Western Europe. Nevertheless, the very fact of tripartite staff talks—for the first time in the history of the war—in an atmosphere of full and frank discussion, and of recognition that the shortening of the war is the first aim of the Allies, is a very great achievement.

As *War and the Working Class* wrote in its issue of the second week in November:—

This task of shortening the war, raised with understandable persistence by the Soviet public, has now, as a result of the proceedings of the Moscow Conference, met with official recognition from the Governments of the Allied countries. At the Moscow Conference the Governments of the three countries, expressing the will of their peoples, unanimously recognised their prime aim to be to hasten the termination of the war. It is to be expected that the definite military operations with regard to which, as the communique of the Conference says, decisions have been taken, and which are already being prepared, will frustrate Hitler's expectations, his hope of protracting the war.

What matters now is to adopt in practice the measures recognised as of prime and paramount importance. What matters now is to give effect to the decisions adopted, the significance and value of which will be determined by the manner, thoroughness and speed of their practical application. This is very well realised by the peoples of all the countries which have been forced by Hitler's brutal tyranny to drain the bitter cup of suffering and humiliation. It is extremely important that the obligations undertaken by our Allies, and now reaffirmed at the Moscow Conference, should be discharged within the proper time.

This aspect of the Moscow Conference has its particular importance, because of the continued massive victories of the Red Army. Contrary to the prophecies of some too complacent Allied statesmen and generals, it means that operations on the same scale as those of the Red Army (the fighting in Italy does not enter into that class) will not be deferred until the autumn of 1944 or 1945. As a consequence, again, the enemy has been deprived of the pleasure, so hopefully anticipated in his propaganda, of seeing political dissensions between the three great Allies — dissensions, moreover, about whether the Soviet frontiers (of all frontiers in the world) were to be revised.

What a tribute to the statesmanship in Moscow that one of the main anti-Soviet organs of the British press, the *Catholic Herald*, should feel impelled on November 5 to announce, in big black type on its front page, that "considerable anxiety about the Moscow agreement is felt among Polish circles in London as well as among those representing the Baltic States" (i.e., among those treacherous anti-Soviet elements who have consti-

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tuted themselves mouthpieces for Hitlerite propaganda). "One of the biggest disappointments is the silence about Soviet-Polish diplomatic relations, as it had been hoped that this trouble would be cleared up" (i.e., that the three Foreign Secretaries in Moscow would have become involved in embittered and hopeless discussions about the Soviet frontier and Polish espionage in the U.S.S.R., to the greater glory of Hitler). "On careful analysis, the agreement boils down to the fact that Britain, America and Russia intend to work together in order to achieve a quick victory" (how revealing that this should cause "anxiety" and "disappointment" to the Polish reactionaries and their Catholic patrons!).

The spirit of co-operation between the three leading Allies took concrete shape at the Conference in two series of decisions.

The first involved a number of steps to continue close collaboration on the pattern of the Moscow Conference itself. The creation of a European Advisory Commission, to sit in London, was of great importance. It must be clearly understood that this was not the formation of a kind of "European Executive Committee," composed of the three Powers. To the extent that the three Powers do in large measure decide the fate of Europe, they do so because of their great strength and resources, and in the degree that they find a common tongue with the smaller European peoples: not because of the creation of any committee, in London or elsewhere. The European Advisory Commission is set up to study European questions arising as the war develops, and to make joint recommendations to the three Governments—and to them only. In other words, it is an internal sub-committee of the three Governmental mechanisms, and participation by representation of other Powers is, for the moment, therefore irrelevant. This is made particularly clear by the supplementary decision that tripartite consultations when necessary (i.e., in other spheres) will continue, through conferences in the respective capitals between the Foreign Secretary in that capital and the two Ambassadors concerned.

The second decision of this series was the establishment of an Advisory Council for matters relating to Italy. Here was a specific issue involving by its very nature a number of States, and therefore the Council also includes a representative of the French Committee of National Liberation. To them will be added representatives of Greece and Yugoslavia, directly affected by Fascist-Italian aggression during the present war. This Council will make recommendations for co-ordinating Allied policy with regard to Italy, other than on military questions.

The third decision of this series was the association of China in a declaration regarding conditions of general security after the war. While it naturally pledged the four Great Powers only to continue hostilities "against those Axis Powers with which they respectively are at war," it went further when discussing the question of the surrender and disarmament of their respective enemies. It insisted that, in those matters, "those of them at war with a common enemy will act together." This principle of the co-ordination of Allied policy in wartime among the Great Powers has been declared, on innumerable occasions and by spokesmen of all four, to be the essential preliminary for victory and for working together in peace. But this is the first occasion on which steps have been taken to give effect to such declarations.

The second series of decisions was in relation to concrete questions raised by the necessities of the war. Each of them signified a direct body-blow to Hitler.

The first was the declaration regarding Austria—that its annexation to Germany, carried out after Hitler's invasion in March, 1938, is null and void; that the three Powers stand for a free and independent Austria; that they want Austria, and

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neighbouring peoples faced with similar problems, "to find that political and economic security which is the only basis for lasting peace"; and that the Austrian people themselves must make their contribution to this end.

The meaning of this declaration is that the Allies show there is no hidden reservation in their mind, and no discrimination, when they speak of liberating European peoples enslaved by Hitlerite Germany. It means that they repudiate the idea, both of "a greater Germany," and of a compulsory Hapsburg or Catholic "*bloc*" in Central Europe. And it means that the Austrians must organise now to fight the Nazi yoke, if the conditions for a free and independent Austria are really to exist—that is, if the Austrian people themselves are to be masters of their fate.

At this point the declaration on Austria links up with the second decision arising out of a practical wartime problem—the declaration on Italian democracy. This declaration is as important as the preceding. While the first gives a practical example of the three Great Powers' concern for the sovereign independence of the European peoples, the second provides what might be called a minimum programme for realising popular freedom. It is a charter of guarantees, and at the same time a list of practical suggestions to the Italian people. Governmental "and other" institutions based on democratic principles; democratic organs of local government; the suppression of Fascist institutions and organisations, the removal of Fascist and pro-Fascist elements from public office, and the arrest of Fascist war criminals among the chiefs and army generals; freedom for the Italians to meet, to form political groups, to speak, to publish newspapers, etc.; finally the introduction of known anti-Fascist representatives into the Italian Government itself—these constitute an ample framework, whereon the mass of the Italian people can build up a democratic State. Since December, 1942, their five illegal anti-Fascist parties have fought together, and led the great Milan strikes in March, 1943, the July strikes all over Italy against Mussolini, and other actions, on just such a programme. At the same time, by giving a concrete example of what the Allies mean by democracy, the declaration is an immense encouragement to the other peoples fighting the Hitlerite war machine—the Yugoslavs, the Poles and many others, including the Germans themselves.

Thirdly, the Three-Power declaration on atrocities, warning the Nazi criminals that they will be tried in the countries where the atrocities were committed, is no less of a direct blow to the Hitlerites. With the spectacle of the Allied victories daily before him, every German soldier and official who has not already hopelessly committed himself to the practice of Nazi brutality, will hesitate henceforth before he carries out the orders of his Nazi superiors. At the same time, the outraged victims all over Europe receive some guarantee that their sufferings will be avenged, humanity given a signal lesson, and any possibility of mercy to the Nazi brutes eliminated. That this course was necessary is shown by the fact that in Britain itself newspapers which, until recently, were loudly calling for the trial of war criminals, have suddenly risen in protest against this most certain form of justice devised by the three Allies. The *New Statesman and Nation*, for example, discovered (November 5) that the procedure "offends the elementary canons of justice," allegedly because these criminals had not broken "the municipal code of the country in which they performed their crimes" (a very strange code, in that case, which does not condemn rape, burning alive, massacre of wounded, gassing in special lethal chambers, etc.!). The *Economist* (November 13) actually assumes the defence of the Fascist murderer and organiser of murders, Pucheu, on the ground that "the demand for death sentences against Vichy men threatens to create a demoralising atmosphere of terror, where only justice is needed" (as

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though death sentences in such cases are anything more than justice!). Tens of millions of European victims of the Nazi terror will be heartened by the Allied declaration; and it is revolting that well-fed and comfortable British journalists, who have endured nothing worse than a few months of air bombardment, should lecture them in the way quoted.

In this decision, no less than in those on Austria and Italy, the great Allies join hands directly with the demands of the common people in the anti-Nazi struggle.

All these decisions have a direct bearing on problems raised by the necessities of war. But the representatives of the three Great Powers assembled in Moscow also showed a hopeful measure of agreement with regard to the broad principles of international organisation after the war.

The Moscow Conference declared for "establishing at the earliest practical date a general international organisation, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, and open to membership by all such States, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security." This decision takes up again the effort made at different stages in the history of the twentieth century to reduce the peril of war—notably in the Hague Conferences and the League of Nations. It rejects utopian or hypocritical schemes for compulsory "federations," or anti-Soviet "federal unions," recognising that every people, large and small, has the right proclaimed by Stalin, on November 6, 1942, of equality and inviolability of its territory, the restoration of its sovereign rights, its right "to arrange its affairs as it wishes." Only on the basis of such equality can a beginning be made of international understanding — provided the Great Powers can agree among themselves. For (contrary to much chatter) experience during the last fifty years has proved repeatedly that it is not the small States which have the arbitrament of the question "peace or war?" but the Great Powers.

The three Foreign Secretaries showed that this lesson was not lost upon them. As *War and the Working Class* wrote in the article already mentioned: "This organisation will undoubtedly have to learn from the history of the decades preceding the war, when the League of Nations failed, as an instrument of peace and security, because the lack of unity in the policy of the leading peace-loving Powers threw open the doors to Fascist reaction." "Therefore the four great Allies associated with the declaration on general security pledged themselves at Moscow to continue their united action after the war, in order to organise and maintain peace and security. They agreed for this purpose, pending the inauguration of that system, to consult with each other and, as required, with other members of the United Nations, with a view to joint action on behalf of the community of nations." They agreed to confer and co-operate with each other, and with other States, for a practicable general agreement regarding "the regulation of armaments in the post-war period."

It need hardly be pointed out that this conception of the continued close co-operation of the four States as the nucleus of the world peace system is, on the one hand, an expansion of the same idea set forth in the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of May 26, 1942, and, on the other hand, strikes a further blow at the bogy which the Nazi propagandists were using far and wide—with the help of foolish or criminal elements in the Allied camp—of either "Anglo-American hegemony" or "Bolshevik supremacy in Europe."

Special attention was paid in Moscow to the economic aspect of this collaboration. This is specifically stated in the communique, while the declaration on general security points out the importance of the maintenance of international peace for ensuring "the least diversion of this world's human and economic resources for armaments." From Mr. Eden's report to the House of Commons, on November 11, we learn:—

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During the Conference Mr. Molotov and I had the chance to hear at first hand from Mr. Hull about measures of economic co-operation which, as we know, he has always had very much at heart. Indeed, after security, these economic questions constitute the most important field in which the lot of man can be improved. We had a useful exchange of views on these questions, and I am glad to say that we all three of us found ourselves in agreement on the programme for handling these vast problems, on many of which work has, as the House knows, already begun.

The announcement that the Soviet Government has agreed to participate in the further Washington discussions on currency questions, and the opening of the Conference of forty-four States to set up the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), were an immediate application of this part of the Moscow programme.

In concluding this survey, it must be emphasised that the Moscow Conference outlined a programme—vital and telling against the enemy in itself, but still a programme. In its fulfilment, many difficulties must be encountered, and it would be a mistake to belittle them. The decisions at Moscow, wrote *War and the Working Class*, enable the Allied Powers "to secure uniformity of policy in the major problems of the war in Europe, especially the problem of reducing the duration of that war, and also to work out certain guiding principles of policy of the post-war period, with a view to paving the way for the establishment of lasting peace and general security." It is quite obvious, bearing in mind existing social, economic and political differences in the world, to understand that being able to secure uniformity of policy and principles is not the same as actually securing it. The struggle to secure the fulfilment of the Moscow decisions will still tax the energies of every progressive force in this and other countries: nor will that struggle solve all problems. It would be sufficient, were proof needed, to point to the ferocious campaign which the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Sunday Times* opened, immediately after the Moscow Conference, *against* the demand for a Second Front which would shorten the war.

Nevertheless, so much was achieved at the Moscow Conference that consistent anti-Fascists in all countries can draw new encouragement and new strength from its decisions. This applies, above all, to their campaign for the maximum concentration of Allied effort, first to terminate the war at the earliest possible date by heavy blows in the West, and then to consolidate victory by the complete rooting out of Fascism and the sources of international war.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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Currency Plans

The Anglo-American Post-War Currency Plans—Some Political Implications

by D. RICHARDS

THE visit of Lord Keynes to Washington, reported to be closely connected with the terms upon which the British Treasury would be prepared to accept the revised version of the White Currency Plan, marks an advanced stage in the discussions that have taken place regarding the Keynes and White proposals for dealing with International financial relations after the war.*

What is the significance and what is the real meaning of these proposals at the present stage in the development of the war? Why are they given such prominence and in what way are the proposals related to the British and American Governments' general commercial and financial policies? Little has hitherto been said relating to the connection between the questions at issue and the big political problems that constitute the central factor in the general background to the present discussions.

It may be well to begin by reminding ourselves that capitalist circles of both Britain and America fear a repetition after the war of the international trade and financial difficulties of the inter-war period, and even of a new world economic crisis similar to that of 1930-1933, with its consequent social convulsions.

To revert to that earlier period, it will be recalled that the World Economic Conference of 1933 tried, without success, to solve the problem of declining trade and to remove the ever-increasing restrictions applied to trade. In his speech to the World Economic Conference, M. Litvinov pointed out that the U.S.S.R. was the only country that had not shown any symptoms of a decline in economic life during that crisis, and pointed out that there had been a reduction of no less than 57.8 per cent. in world trade between 1929 and 1932. It was at this conference that Litvinov emphasised the necessity for all nations to pursue an expansionist trade policy through the abolition of tariffs and through removal of all forms of economic and financial discrimination, and indicated that should the conference agree to the conditions of economic disarmament proposed by the Soviet Delegation, the U.S.S.R. was in a position to absorb enormous quantities of imports amounting to between 25 per cent. and 66 per cent. of existing world stocks in respect of such metals as aluminium, nickel, copper and lead, at 100 per cent. in the case of some of the consumers' goods mentioned (i.e., tea, cocoa, coffee, and herrings) to one-third of the annual world export of machinery, and to 100 per cent. of the year's shipbuilding output.

As is known, the Soviet proposal for a pact of economic non-aggression was, in the words of Litvinov, ". . . taken prisoner and thrown into a dungeon—one of the League of Nations' commissions." At the same time, he warned the conference against the ever increasing tendency for measures of economic aggression to be introduced in country after country.

What then do the Keynes and White proposals respectively suggest for the restoration of international trade after the war? Both sets of proposals limit their terms of reference to the technical question of devising means for settling balances which will arise from international trade and financial transactions

* The British plan was published in a White Paper under Title "Proposals for an International Clearing Union," April, 1943, and the American plan was also published in a White Paper under title "United States proposal for a United and Associated Nations' Stabilisation Fund," April 7, 1943.

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after the war. The wider questions of relief and reconstruction, long-term investment, commodity controls, abnormal war balances, etc., are not gone into at this stage. Both plans see the problem they have to deal with in identical terms. Firstly, they recognise that after the war, for a period of years at least, a number of countries will have deficits in their balances of payments, if their requirements for goods and services are to be met, and they will be confronted with a further difficulty of finding the means of payment which would be accepted by the creditor countries. Unless means of payment are forthcoming for the deficit countries they will either default on their obligations or so narrow down new purchases in an effort to achieve a balance in their international payments, that they will increasingly resort to the familiar practice of trade and exchange restrictions, and thus recreate the commercial conditions of the thirties.

The object of both proposals is to create machinery that will prevent violent fluctuations in exchange rates and competitive currencies after the war—in other words, it is proposed to set up an international organisation to keep the financial markets of the world in balance. Thus, in the post-war world as pictured by the British and American financial experts, there would be an international organisation ready to provide means of payment whenever the shortage of foreign exchange threatened. More exactly, the proposals are concerned with the provision of short-term loans to cover temporary balance of payment deficits.

The main features of the British plan for organising international short-term lending are:—

1. The creation of an international currency union to be known as The International Clearing Union based on a new currency called Bancor.

2. The Bancor, or new unit of account, to serve as the means of international payment.

3. Each country would start with an agreed credit expressed in Bancor.

4. Should the balance of trade of a member country result in a deficit, it could run a debit, i.e., obtain overdraft facilities at the clearing union up to a certain limit.

5. A member country could also borrow Bancor from countries with excessive credit balances.

6. The extent of borrowing rights is limited by assigning each member country a quota based on the volume of its *foreign trade* on the average of previous years.

7. The larger countries to be represented on the Governing Board of the clearing union individually; the smaller countries through groups.

8. The voting rights to be proportional to the quotas.

9. When a member country's debit balance to the clearing union exceeds half its borrowing quota, a deposit of gold, or even the outright transfer of its gold reserves to the union may be required.

In choosing volume of trade rather than gold held as the basis for the national quotas in the British plan, it is clear that the British authorities are intending to stake everything on regaining their pre-war share of world trade (e.g., in 1938 the countries within the British orbit of trade accounted for 43 per cent. of world trade, whereas the United States, including South American countries, only accounted for 17½ per cent.).

It is essential to underline the fact that the quotas assigned to the various countries are a central feature of the British plan, as such quotas will determine the voting powers and the number of Governors each country can appoint to the Board of Governors. Further, the quotas also determine the overdraft facilities that will be granted. When the debit balance has averaged three-quarters of the quota for the year, the power of expulsion of a member country from the union can be applied unless that country introduces remedial measures within two years. These remedial measures are defined as interest on the amount of credit, devaluation of currency, surrender of gold and their reserves, and, most significant of all, the withdrawal of credit facilities and the confiscation of the existing balances of the country not complying with the requirements laid down. This latter measure places a weapon of international control in the hands of the

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clearing union, and in practice means exercising the power of policing, through the withdrawal of overdraft facilities, and also implies exercising political pressure on the borrowing countries.

The American plan has many similarities, but also important differences for dealing with the problem of short-term lending. The main features of the original White Plan are:—

1. The creation of a stabilisation fund with extensive exchange powers.

2. The currency unit of the fund would be known as Unitas. This unit to have a fixed gold value—in contrast to the Bancor—equivalent to 10 dols. of the present gold value.

3. Unitas accounts are only to be opened against a deposit of gold, into which they are to be freely convertible, and by which they must be covered 100 per cent.

4. The fund's resources to total 5,000,000,000 dols. (i.e., £1,000,000,000), this amount to be contributed before the fund can begin to operate.

5. Each participating country is to contribute its quota consisting either of gold, its own currency, or Government securities. Fifty per cent. of the quota to be paid up on becoming a member, 12.5 per cent. to be in gold, 12.5 per cent. in subscribers' money, and 25 per cent. in securities.

6. Borrowing from the fund to take the form of the borrowing country giving the fund its own currency in exchange for the currency it requires, e.g., sterling handed over in exchange for dollars.

7. The fund would be supported when fully paid by a 25 per cent. gold reserve (the British scheme is based entirely on credit), 25 per cent. national currencies and 50 per cent. in Government securities contributed by member states.

A substantial number of minor changes have been made from the April draft of the White Plan, which met strong criticism from Lord Keynes, but very few major changes have been introduced. The four major provisions of the new plan are:—

1. An international agreement to help stabilise foreign exchange rates and avoid competitive currency depreciation.

2. Resources from which the countries can buy needed foreign exchange, under appropriate safeguards, while taking timely steps to adjust their international position.

3. The encouragement of the adoption of measures to bring about an equilibrium in the international balance of payments of member countries.

4. Policies designed to eliminate exchange controls and discriminatory currency practices which interfere with the balanced growth of international trade, because international monetary co-operation is essential.

We are brought back again and again in any consideration of the United States' plan, to the prominence given to gold in the scheme as the basis for quotas. It is not difficult to understand this in the light of the fact that the United States now holds the bulk of the world's supplies of gold, i.e., over $22,000,000,000. The modifications subsequently introduced in the plan have not changed the emphasis placed on gold. Thus, in the latest report of a plan for a $10,000,000,000 world bank submitted by Mr. Morganthau to a Joint Secret Session of the Senate Banking and Foreign Exchange Relations Committee, it is pointed out that the bank is to issue its own international guarantee covered by gold to the extent of 50 per cent. (*Financial News*, October 7, 1943), and that the United States contribution to this bank should be 30 per cent.

Whether the proposal for an international bank as at present put forward proves to be the final American contribution to the problem of short and long-term lending remains to be seen. It is, however, at least clear that American finance capital already feels itself strong enough to come out into the open and demand to regulate the whole of world economy without compromise. They are, evidently, intent on demanding that all currencies should be firmly pegged to the dollar and have a direct concern lest the huge American gold reserve should prove valueless.

It is not to be wondered at that the latest American proposal for a world bank should be said to have alarmed the City. One of the basic features of this proposal is the intention to tie the £ to gold, and thus make New York the world's financial centre. Whatever the final intentions of the American financial interests are on the question of the role to be accorded Britain in the post-war financial world, the provisions respecting the smaller and

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poorer countries are not open to doubt. Their role is to be one of increasing dependence upon American finance capital. In so far as each country participating in the stabilisation fund is expected to contribute its quota either in gold, its own currency or national securities, it is clear that as the smaller and poorer countries are not in a position to offer gold, they must part with their vital national securities. Once these are taken over by the fund, the economic life of such countries will be subjected to the domination of the power that controls the stabilisation fund. Again, the provision in the revised version of the White Plan which stipulates *appropriate safeguards* while the member country is taking steps to adjust its international position, is only another way of stating that the fund will demand the handing over of collateral in the form of vital securities before resources for the purchase of foreign exchange are provided. The American proposals do not intend that there shall be any half-way house in this connection, and under certain clauses of the original White Plan, participating countries will not be allowed to control their provision of foreign exchange (see Item 1, Section 6, Policies of Member Countries). Likewise, participating countries will not be allowed to enter into *mutual* trading arrangements (see Item 4, Section 6, Policy of Member Countries). To the extent that the American scheme is an attempt to subordinate national economic right of self-government to international control (in actual practice Dollar Control), it is clear that such a scheme places the powers of absolute veto over any proposed changes in the hands of the American financial interests.

But actually the character of the international situation arising from democratic victory over Fascism will bring into play new factors which will compel a new orientation to the problems of the war-devastated countries. What forms should this new orientation take?

The creation of democratic governments in the war-ravaged countries is the first step to any economic or financial stablisation of those areas. The peoples of the war-stricken countries will not be prepared to accept a return to the old methods of government, however skilfully disguised. The solution of the urgent problems (i.e., feeding conditions, pestilence, etc.) that will confront the peoples in Europe will need more than either Bancor or Unitas, and will need foremost the whole-hearted co-operation of the British and American people with the people of the Soviet Union for the liberation of Europe from all forms of economic and political oppression.

Under no circumstances will the policy of financial blackmail, so prominent in the post-Versailles period, avail. What is needed first and foremost is measures against any possibility of speculation on Europe's post-war need. In this connection the paramount need was clearly stated by Krutikov, Chairman of the Soviet Delegation to the Hot Springs Food Conference in the following words:

> **The Soviet Delegation consider it necessary to stress the need for co-ordinated measures against any possible speculation after the war on the needs of European countries which are affected by the war and German occupation. This problem must be reflected in the decisions of the conference as one of its most important recommendations on problems of food distribution after the war.**

No scheme for the post-war reconstruction of trade will work unless the freedom-loving countries unite in working for the removal of all restrictions and discriminations as between one country and another. Any attempt to revert to national trade policies with their complicated clearing agreements, etc., in which Nazi Germany excelled, is fraught with new dangers and complications. The present plight of Europe can hardly be grasped from economic data alone, and when hostilities are concluded the virtual dependence of most of these areas upon the outside world for help and succour will demand that the rich nations come forward with policies for rehabilitation

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and reconstruction that do not savour of usury and dictatorship. The progressive Governments will welcome any steps taken to meet their requirements in the spirit of co-operation, and would welcome any weapons to prevent financial blackmail being imposed by reactionary interests.

We already have in the Anglo-American Mutual Aid Agreement of February 23, 1942, and the Mutual Aid Agreement between the United States and the U.S.S.R. of June 11, 1942, an identical basis for advantageous economic relations between countries for the betterment of the world. Both Agreements provide for agreed action by the signatories, open to participation by all other countries of like mind,

> directed to the expansion by appropriate international and domestic measures, of production, employment, and the exchange and consumption of goods, which are the material foundations of the liberty and welfare of all peoples; to the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce; and to the reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers.

The need for short and long-term credits in the European countries at the end of hostilities will be enormous. On what terms are these to be provided? In the sphere of credit relations in the pre-war years we might recall that it was the Soviet Union which set an example with the granting in 1934 to Turkey of an interest-free credit totalling $10,000,000, to enable her to import machinery for the development of native Turkish industry. Turkey was also given Soviet technical assistance in her textile industry. The great importance of international co-operation in the provision of credit facilities, on terms mutually agreed among democratic countries, in post-war Europe needs no emphasis.

The general conditions of economic collaboration between nations have been clearly laid down in the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of May, 1942, which provided:—

> The High Contracting Parties, having regard to the interests of the security of each of them, agree to work together in close and friendly collaboration after the re-establishment of peace for the organisation of security and economic prosperity in Europe. They will take into account the interests of the United Nations in these objects.

This principle—that collaboration of the Great Powers is essential for world economic prosperity—is just what was missing before the present war. It has been taken a stage further at the Moscow Conference. This is clear from the communique issued on November 1, which states:—

> Second only to the importance of hastening the end of the war was the recognition by the three Governments that it was essential in their own national interests and in the interest of all peace-loving nations to continue the present close collaboration and co-operation in the conduct of the war into the period following the end of hostilities and that only in this way could peace be maintained and the political, economic and social welfare of their peoples fully promoted.

The Soviet Union is now giving a further earnest of its intentions, by announcing its willingness to participate in the renewed currency talks in Washington. Their success in the long run, however, must depend on consistent application of the general principles of genuine international collaboration.

The scarcity of LABOUR MONTHLY has been particularly felt among our readers in the Forces. One airman writes: "Any copies which civilian readers could send on to us will be greatly appreciated." Therefore, we would make two suggestions to those who feel they can spare their copy when they have finished with it: (1) send it on to a friend in the Forces; or (2) send it to us here, marked "Please Forward," and we will post it on to where it will be very warmly welcomed.

Soldiers, sailors and airmen please note. When writing, please say whether you would like these used copies sent you regularly; if so, do not forget to let us know when you change your address.

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China To-Day

by ARTHUR CLEGG

THE September meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang (the ruling party of Free China and the only existing party in most areas) was of considerable importance. The main subject of discussion was the post-war position of China and its decisions were expressed in two main resolutions. Of equal importance were the statements made at the session by Chiang Kai-shek on the war, Chinese democracy in the future, and relations between the Kuomintang and the Communist Parties. Chiang now combines the positions and powers of President, Prime Minister and Generalissimo.

The background of the session was a combination of danger and hope. Danger from the increasing Japanese intrigues and China's military and economic difficulties; hope from Allied victories and slowly increasing aid to China.

China's military difficulties are due to lack of arms, lack of transport, insufficient good generals, insufficient trained reserves, and a bad supply system. For some of these—planes, heavy artillery and trucks—China is dependent on her allies, but for many of them the remedy lies within China itself, for example, increasing the production of small arms from Chinese materials, ensuring the better distribution of food to the army, and the better organisation of reserves.

The best generals realise this. General Chen Ch'eng, Commander on the Hunn-Hupeh front, when called back from Yunnan to repulse the Japanese break-through towards Chungking in their spring and summer offensive in that area, declared that the Japanese penetration of the difficult terrain in Hupeh "was due to our negligence." (*Central Daily News*, June 19, 1943.) He called for the co-ordination of all political, economic and military means to intensify preparations for the counter-attack.

The economic difficulties arise firstly from hoarding by landlords and merchants, who, above all, control the supply of food to the towns. Because hoarding and speculation are so profitable, money is not invested in industry and the Government finds borrowing difficult, just at the same time as it finds the price of the goods it wants to buy for the war expensive. Many of its measures to check this process are admirable, but they are ineffective because, except in the Border Regions, government does not rely on the people to carry its measures out, rather it relies on the hoarders themselves.

Peasants in China (apart from the Border Regions where rents have been reduced to 25 per cent. of pre-war) pay the bulk (from 50 to 80 per cent.) of their crops to the landlords, who thus control the food market and are able to profiteer scandalously and to create difficulties for the feeding of the army. The new system of land tax by which tax is now collected in grain, not money, and paid to the Central Government, promises a partial solution to this problem, but is not yet operated successfully as much of the grain is taken by speculators.

In 1942, examining the first year's work of the Land Tax, the *Ta Kung Pao* (the *Manchester Guardian* of China) wrote that only 7½ per cent. of the food collected in the first collection was actually used as Government rice.

Dr. Sun Fo, President of the Legislative Yuan, in a speech reported in the *Ta Kung Pao* (October 16, 1942) said: "Present collections (of the Land Tax) and forced sales (of grain) have not reached saturation point. The landlords' share of the taxes is still too small, while the small owners are shouldering an increased burden. During recent years the landlord class has been greatly enriched. . . . The big landlords are employing their surplus funds to increase their holdings."

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More recently the *Ta Kung Pao* wrote: "The landlords' minds are restricted by their environment. They rely on profit from the land but are increasingly tending to go into commercial business to increase their profits since they see the growing prosperity of the merchants. The merchants are versatile and cunning in their search for profit, and they tend to put their excess profits into the land, in order to stabilise their newly won wealth for the rest of their lives. Thus the merchants are also becoming landlords, while the landlords are also becoming merchants, and neither of them wants to invest in industrial enterprises."

Even the *Central Daily News*, the official Kuomintang paper, has said in discussing China's present problems: "At present the landlords are living lives of leisure in the towns on the basis of the strenuous labour and hardships of the peasants."

The result of this in industry is shown by the small number of factories in Free China—1,300 in 1940 and 1,900 at the end of 1942, which compares, for example, with a figure of over 70,000 factories for Brazil, another poorly industrialised country. Nor are all these factories producing essential goods. Steel production in 1942 was only 10,000 tons, 24 per cent. of the Government's plan and less than an hour's output in the United States.

Japan seeks to make this confusion worse confounded. Her recent offensive in Hunan-Hupeh, the "rice bowl" of China, had as one of its main purposes the destruction of crops. As war shortages of goods in Japan increase, especially shortages of metals, so Japanese traders and their agents in China offer high prices for scrap from Free China and for Free China goods, thus increasing economic difficulties there. Moreover, the Japanese are in effective occupation of the former International Settlement in Shanghai and other foreign concessions and have nominally handed them over to their puppet Nanking government to be dangled as bribes before merchants and former property owners in Chungking. Such bribes have been offered to China in the three peace offers that China recently rejected, one of which is reported to have been on the basis of a return to 1937 frontiers. By intensifying such "peace" policies Japan has hoped to offset the defects of her allies and herself.

Japan's economic policies and China's lack of effective counter measures give the Japanese contacts with Free China. Recently the Chinese authorities caught and executed a Chinese in Chungking who had been sent as a Japanese agent from the occupied areas to create difficulties between the Chinese and the American airmen in China. But for this one minor agent caught, many others, more dangerous, go untouched.

Among the merchants and the remnants of the old warlords still powerful among army officers and generals, Japanese propaganda often finds receptive soil. Its main object is to create civil war in China. This would be so great a Japanese victory as would outweigh all defeats elsewhere. The favourite method used by these treacherous forces and others who fall for their propaganda is to fabricate stories of Communist attacks on other Chinese Government armies, to repeat in other forms the Nazi myth of the Katyn graves. This, too, has evidently become a favourite device of Chang Tao-fang, the Kuomintang Minister of Information, who, before the meeting of the Central Executive Committee, caused such stories to be printed in the Chinese press, instructed Chinese officials in Allied countries to launch attacks on the Communists, and succeeded in deceiving a few gullible Westerners.

Behind the reactionary policy of which Chang was the spokesman stand two main groups. First a handful of reactionary generals who, under the leadership of General Ho Yung-ching, Minister of War and Chief of Staff, nearly brought China to disaster in 1940, and who early this year sent seven divisions to strengthen the

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blockade of Border Regions. Second, a group of politicians led by the two Chen brothers who control the Kuomintang Central Party Office and who, during the past three years, have spent their time trying to smash the democratic organisations of the national front, and subject them all to the rigid control of that office.

Outside China one other factor was forced on the attention of the C.E.C. Business men in Britain and America know of China's desperate shortage of industry, her valuable resources, her desire to industrialise. They expect to turn this to their own account and to that end have been putting pressure on their own and on the Chinese Government.

"It is certain that in the early stages of Chinese reconstruction and before the real temper of her government has been ascertained, capital from private sources will be difficult to obtain," wrote the British journal *Great Britain and the East* on May 22, 1943. "The short term prospect for investment in China is uncertain," said a *Times* correspondent on August 13, raising the question of the Chinese law which requires that 51 per cent. of capital in Sino-foreign enterprises should be Chinese. "Apart from the question of availability of funds (there is) uncertainty about Chinese taxation, treatment of existing enterprises, and about the position of foreign capital if invested in Sino-foreign enterprises."

These were the gloomy factors. There were also hopeful ones to encourage the patriots and strengthen the vacillators. The Soviet victories; the growing strength of the United Nations and the victories that it had already brought; the rather larger volume of supplies reaching China; the victory won by the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives in June of this year in securing the abolition of the appointed reactionary Board of Directors that was strangling and corrupting them, and the securing of guarantees that they could continue to develop along democratic lines.

Especially important among the hopeful factors was the increasing strength of the Border Regions, which has been shown not only in the many defeats inflicted on the Japanese (Chinese soldiers in these regions are engaging from one-third to a half of the 30 Japanese divisions in China*) but also in their growing economic and political strength. Early this year, for example, they formed the million strong North China Federation of Labour, the only democratic trade union federation in China to-day.

Seen against this background, the main resolution of the C.E.C. represented a check to the defeatist forces. It declared that the urgent tasks before China were to increase the power of resistance, to realise Dr. Sun's industrial programme, and to promote democracy.

Chiang Kai-shek in his speeches went further. He stressed the hopeful signs of victory, spoke of the part China must play in the coming counter-offensives in the Pacific, and stated his personal opinion that within a year of the end of war all parties in China must have equal rights with the Kuomintang.

His speech on relations with the Communists had two distinct sides. In some parts he gave handles to the reactionaries, in other parts he laid down policies diametrically opposed to those who wish to create civil war. In the first he accused the Communists of "provocations," of "forcibly occupying national territory," of "obstructing the prosecution of the war." All these are exactly the charges of those who desire civil war, and they are untrue and most dangerous.

At the same time in the second part he declared that "the Communist problem was purely political and should be solved by political means" (i.e., no armed attacks, as the defeatists wanted). "We should make it clear that the Central

* The strength of the Japanese army is 100 divisions. China is still engaging a greater portion of the Japanese army than all the Pacific and Burma fronts put together.

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Government has no particular demand to make of the Chinese Communist Party" (i.e., the Government should put forward nothing which would give the reactionaries a handle). Finally he said: "If the Communist Party can prove their good faith by making good these promises (i.e., those they made in 1937, which they have most scrupulously and loyally observed A.C.) the Central Government . . . will once more treat them with sympathy and consideration so that we may accomplish hand in hand the great task of resistance and reconstruction."

Chiang's conclusion was identical with the main point of the great resolution on resistance and reconstruction issued by the Chinese Communist Party last year and is a very hopeful sign. Nevertheless the defeatists and traitors, though checked, remain in the field and were able to carry on their subversive work at the People's Political Council (an entirely appointed body) which met a few days later. They will continue to disrupt China's war effort while they remain in positions of power, and while the Chinese Government continues to rely for the execution of its policies upon the backward upper strata of the population instead of on the people. What is necessary is to extend now the democracy that has been promised for after the war, and to build unity immediately, not in words, but by ending the blockade on the Border Regions, by sending all troops engaged in the blockade to the front, and by again sending proper pay and supplies to the 18th Group (Eighth Route) and New Fourth Armies.

Above all, what is necessary is for the Kuomintang to respond to the appeal of the Chinese Communist Party for joint discussions on the solution of all problems. Only on the basis of common agreement between these two parties can the war be ended in the interest of the whole Chinese people, can the democracy now promised by the Kuomintang be achieved and China take her rightful place among the nations.

The dismissal of Chang Tao-fang from the Ministry of Information, and the setting up of a committee on which two Communists are serving to consider the introduction of democratic government both nationally and locally, which two decisions followed the C.E.C. meeting, are but the first steps in this process, in which there is still a long way to go.

In the solution of all these problems Britain and America, China's Allies, have a great part to play, both because they are allies, and because the liberal elements in China are especially sensitive to their actions. These anti-Japanese liberal elements are encouraged and the capitulators checked by every resolute act of Britain and America in waging war as a whole (e.g., a second front in Europe promising a speedy end to war here and therefore a speedier concentration on Japan would encourage them tremendously) and by every act of friendship and resistance to China. By contrast, the capitulators are encouraged and the patriots discouraged by faltering of Britain and America and every show of indifference to China.

Equally as dangerous, in the long run, as indifference, are all policies, private or governmental, of holding China to ransom because of her industrial weakness. In its second main resolution the Kuomintang C.E.C. capitulated to the pressure of foreign interests by abolishing the law which restricts foreign capital in any company in China to 49 per cent. of the total. China needs machinery now to expand her war industries, she will need great quantities of machinery and goods after the war to fulfil her programme of reconstruction and to raise the very low standard of living of her people. A proper policy of assisting real reconstruction in China can be one of the important ways of solving Britain's industrial problems after the war. That is one thing; the exploitation of the misery and poverty of Chinese workers by avaricious financial sharks in Britain and America is another, and will just as surely lead to disaster in the future as it has done in the past.

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The British and American Governments have made many excellent promises to China and President Roosevelt has recently repeated those made by America. Assistance to China has increased, though it will not be on a big scale till a road is opened through Burma. But Britain and America can do much more. Instead of allowing business men to rub their hands over prospects in China in the future, the Government can send machinery now to build up China's war industries. British and American spokesmen can express their gratitude for what the Border Regions and 18th Group Army have done and are doing for the whole battle front in the Far East. British co-operatives can increase their aid and contacts with the Chinese movement, British trade unions can establish contacts with the great trade union movement of North China, British students and scientific societies can build connections with their counterparts in China, thus helping and encouraging China in her resistance and in the achievement of the purposes of Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

The declarations of the Moscow Conference, showing increasing unity between Britain, the United States and the U.S.S.R., and to one of the most important of which China was an equal signatory, will be a powerful encouragement to all patriotic forces in China. The words of the Chinese Ambassador in Moscow that "this is the happiest day of my life," will be echoed by millions and will bring forth a redoubling of effort in the defeat of the Japanese warlords and in the building of the new China.

Changes in Local Government

by N. BRANSON

(A Contribution for Discussion)

IN the past year, councillors, local labour parties, and others concerned with the work of local authorities have been discussing the problem of the revision of local government areas.

This question is closely related to the desire of the people for widespread social and economic changes. The demands for social security, for decent houses, for better education, for a national health service, which have arisen as a result of the war, are hardening into a determination to challenge the vested interests standing in the way, and to sweep away the obstacles to progress. The present structure of local government is undoubtedly one such obstacle, and reform of its machinery is essential if the progressive plans now being discussed are to materialise fully. Moreover, reform of local government machinery is urgently necessary, as we shall see, if the people are to extend control of their own lives.

The present controversy on local government reform is not new, though it takes a new form—discussions around the need for change have been carried on for many decades as new problems have arisen. Though many of our local councils originated in feudal times, the present structure dates mainly from the end of the last century when the people's needs were very different from what they are to-day.

At the present time our vital social services in England and Wales are administered by no less than 1,530 authorities, comprising 83 county boroughs, which are "all-purpose" authorities with comprehensive powers; 62 county councils, responsible in part or in whole for health, public assistance, town planning, education, highways, police, etc.; 309 non-county boroughs and 572 urban district councils with varied powers in relation to the above services and responsible for many other local services; and

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475 rural district councils with more restricted local powers. Finally, there are 7,000 parish councils and over 4,000 parish meetings. Many of these authorities are historic relics whose boundaries have no relation to modern requirements. Others have insufficient scope to satisfy the needs of the rapidly extending populations.

Scottish local government was much simplified by the reforms carried out under the 1929 Act, which reduced the total number of local authorities to 429. Nevertheless, Scotland still suffers to a great extent from the same disabilities as the English structure.

Greater London, the largest town in the world, with a population of ten millions, is ruled by a confused medley of authorities comprising the London County Council with its twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs, the Middlesex County Council with an assortment of non-county boroughs and urban district councils, three county boroughs with comprehensive powers, parts of four other county councils each with their subordinate authorities, and last but not least, the City Corporation.

Many local authorities are far too small in relation to the services expected of them. This is particularly striking in the case of the health and hospital services. An adequate medical service can only be provided if it is planned in relation to a population which is large enough to justify big, fully equipped hospitals, and specialist services of every type. The present maintenance of small hospitals with a limited number of beds by authorities with small populations and inadequate resources is wasteful and inefficient, and above all, fails to give the people what they want. What are needed are regional authorities, large enough to plan and administer the service on comprehensive lines.

Again, the unplanned building development of recent years, sprawling monstrously across the countryside owes its origin, in part at least, to the smallness of the authorities and their lack of co-ordinated planning. If the present plans for healthy homes in beautiful surroundings with adequate roads and amenities are to be realised, many fundamental changes will be needed. The resistance of vested interests—private ownership of land, of railways, etc. are by far the most formidable obstacles—is facilitated by the barriers of the old local government boundaries, which must be swept away if any big advances are to be made. For example, the L.C.C.'s great plan for a future London is cramped and frustrated even in its initial stages by the existence in the Greater London area of no less than seventy-seven other town-planning authorities owning no allegiance to the L.C.C. and more or less free to carry on as they choose.

There is not space here to elaborate further on the duplication and overlapping, the general waste and inefficiency resulting from the antiquated and complex structure of our local authorities. But on all sides it is beginning to be admitted that radical changes are needed.

Here it must be stressed that while much needs to be changed, much needs to be preserved and strengthened. The repeated widening of the franchise in the past fifty years, and the increasing participation of the working-class political parties in local government has meant that many local authorities are to a great extent close to the people and capable of championing the cause of the people in defiance of reactionary interests. It is only a few years ago that the Poplar Council fought a great battle on behalf of the unemployed and thirty-one councillors went to jail for refusing to collect the rates for the L.C.C. and Metropolitan Police. The days when the Boards of Guardians of West Ham, Bedwelty and Chester-le-Street were suspended for daring to operate decent scales of out-relief are still remembered. The spirit which caused these councillors to act in the way they did has shown itself in countless ways since that time.

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The picture drawn by some theorists of "backward" local authorities constantly goaded on by "progressive" central administrators to bring about needed reforms is as false as most half-truths. Granted there is much that is foolish, hidebound and even corrupt in local administration—particularly where the electorate is confused and disillusioned or where the labour movement itself is weak—it nevertheless remains true that in recent years most of the improvements in the general standard of our social services have sprung originally from the initiative and enterprise of individual authorities who paved the way to reform —often in opposition to Whitehall. It was the Finsbury Borough Council who forced through a plan for bomb-proof shelters in defiance of the Chamberlain Government. Many local authorities at that time were fighting for the same thing. When war-time nurseries were first being set up, it was the local authorities who were trying to get down to the job, and the Ministry of Health which was holding them up. The Manchester Education Committee opened its schools for two-year-olds before the Board of Education had declared itself in favour. For the past year local authorities have continually petitioned the Government for improvements in the Rent Restrictions Acts and were largely responsible for obtaining the wider requisitioning powers, recently granted. It is the local authorities who are at this minute demanding to be allowed actively to prepare for their new housing schemes (with all that this involves regarding control of the land) while the Government havers and wavers and refuses to pass the necessary legislation. Indeed, because of the incessant participation of local councillors in work relating closely to the lives of the people, almost *every* local council is a potential force for the good of the people, amenable to pressure from below, and capable of being mobilised for progressive struggle against reaction.

Side by side with—and sometimes *because* of—these democratic trends in local government, there has grown up a sinister tendency towards increasing bureaucratic control from Whitehall. This tendency has taken various forms and is inextricably mixed up with the financial stranglehold of the Treasury over the activities of local councils. An unjust rating system, coupled with restrictive methods of administering central government grants, has meant that progressive local authorities have for years been hamstrung for lack of funds to carry through improvements. Simultaneously, important services have been taken out of the hands of the local authorities altogether and put under "national control"—often on the pretext of "relieving" local authorities of financial embarrassments caused by the actions of the central government itself. Thus, the welfare of the unemployed, and later of the old age pensioners, was handed over to the body now known as the "Assistance Board" which is utterly remote from any kind of local control and —on paper, at any rate—not even answerable to Parliament itself.

Again, tighter financial control and over-developed supervision by Government departments has meant that, in respect of some services, councils have deteriorated into little more than local agencies of Whitehall, operating in accordance with the instructions received in Government circulars.

This process has reached an acute stage since the war, with the appointment of the twelve Regional Commissioners with autocratic powers, and the decentralisation of the work of many government departments into the hands of regional officials of one kind or another. The excuse for the appointment of the Regional Commissioners was the supposed necessity in moments of military urgency for " dictators " who could take "swift action," cutting through the red tape, arising from the "tangle of competing bodies" in the shape of our local

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authorities. In practice, during the only period when their powers were put to the test, the Regional Commissioners failed so devastatingly to alleviate the miseries of the blitzed population, that the word "regionalism" has been brought into disrepute. But the danger that obsolete local government areas will be made the excuse for transferring more and more services away from local control still remains; and those councils which turn a blind eye to the need for reorganisation are hastening their own decay.

The proposals now under discussion have many things in common—all stress the need for retaining democratic control, and none of them bear the slightest resemblance to the wartime "regionalism" described above. First in the field was the "Interim Report on the Reform of Local Government Structure" issued by the National Association of Local Government Officers proposing that the country should be divided up between a number of "all-purpose" authorities, each embracing a population of between 100,000 and 500,000, with powers to appoint their own provincial authorities for certain services, and to delegate powers to smaller authorities in sparsely populated areas.

The N.A.L.G.O. proposals aroused a storm of opposition—some of it based on a blind determination on the part of existing authorities to survive at all costs in their present form quite regardless of the changing needs of the electorate. Thus the Non-County Boroughs Association have announced that they see no necessity for altering the present structure of local government at all. It is clear that basically it is extremely difficult to persuade even the most devoted and hard-working councillor that the cause of progress could best be served by the abolition of his own particular authority and with it his own particular seat. But much of the opposition was justified in the sense that the proposals would not by any means fit in with the requirements of many important areas.

The Labour Party, in its pamphlet *The Future of Local Government*, puts forward a plan for a two-tier system which would involve the abolition of all-purpose authorities altogether. The basis of this scheme is that there are some services which require large-scale planning and administration, while others can best be handled on a small scale by authorities with an intimate knowledge of their own locality. The Labour Party therefore recommends that the country as a whole should be divided into areas each suitable for a regional or major authority. The region would probably be an adaptation of existing county areas. The regional authority would be responsible for services which need large scale planning, such as hospitals, trunk roads, education, etc. Within each region there would be area authorities to administer purely local services, such as maternity and child welfare, midwifery, most of the responsibilities now undertaken by local sanitary inspectors, small housing and road schemes, etc. Both authorities would be directly elected. The size and number of the smaller areas is not defined in the scheme, but it is specifically stated that "they should be as few as will make efficient democratic local government reasonably possible"; and this would involve the amalgamations of many rural and urban authorities. It is suggested that the foregoing principles could be applied to the whole country, including London and Scotland.

The plan was adopted in principle at the Labour Party Conference, though not without opposition from some local Labour Parties. But it was significant that none of the opponents was able to put forward a positive alternative. Some of the objections to the scheme were based on the fear that a precarious labour majority on a particular council might be lost through amalgamation with an adjacent and more backward unit. This is, of course, a factor that can work both ways. In any case, any forecasts about future elections which do not take into

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account the immense changes in the mind and purpose of the people since the war and the transformation of many backward semi-rural areas into strongholds of industrial activity are quite unrealistic.

The most telling argument against the Labour Party's scheme—or indeed the NALGO proposals—is the contention that larger areas of administration will mean that the authorities themselves will become undemocratic and remote from the people. Thus, the Executive Council of the Rural District Councils Association claims that these councils provide *local* government in its fullest democratic sense, and that they constitute for country folk their direct and intimate share in our popularly elected system of local government. But in practice there is no indication that our smaller authorities, *as at present constituted*, command greater interest than our larger ones. In the London area a higher proportion of voters take part in the L.C.C. elections than in the metropolitan borough elections. The conception that a large-area local authority must necessarily be out of touch with the people it represents arises partly from the reactionary composition and behaviour of many English county councils, where there is often a shortage of candidates and where, even when there is a contest, it is not unknown for only 5 per cent. of the voters to go to the polls. One reason—that membership of a county council involves long travelling and giving up a day's pay, so that only relatively well-to-do people can stand as councillors—can be overcome by the Labour Party's proposal that all councillors should be reimbursed for any pecuniary loss. But this factor is not decisive, for many of the rural district councils are little different in this respect from their respective county councils. They are often dominated by the local squires and people of leisure, there is often a shortage of candidates, and if there is a contest, few people bother to vote.

Experience has shown in the past that it is not the size of the area which counts —rather is it the amount of political activity in the locality. Interest has usually been highest where the working-class political parties have come forward with a virile and fighting programme, have presented a policy which fires the imagination of the people, which makes them feel that by casting a vote they can influence the course of their own lives.

The fighting programme is still the first essential. There is, however, a second essential bound up with it—the necessity for far greater opportunities than exist at present for the people to participate in the management of their own affairs. It is precisely this aim which is lacking in the Labour Party's programme—had it been present, the arguments about "remoteness" might have fallen to the ground.

How the new machinery can provide for this is a matter for intensive discussion within the labour movement. But the key to the question lies, not in the retention of small and ineffective local authorities, but in providing opportunities for *consultation and reporting back at every stage*. In this connection, the traditional method in Glasgow should be studied, where, in each ward, citizens' meetings elect annually their ward committees and assemble from time to time to hear and discuss a report on the Council's activities. Similar provisions for consultation could well be extended everywhere. The exact form they should take in each area can only be worked out by the local labour movements.

Greater participation by the people is also needed in the *management* of the most important services. Education is an example. The school management committees, consisting of volunteers co-opted into the work of assisting in the good management of the schools, have done remarkably fine work in some localities. But how much more effectively could such work be carried on by joint teacher-parent committees, who, in every school, could become the voice of those people

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most concerned with education. In the housing sphere, should not the tenants and residents associations be the recognised bodies with which sanitary inspectors should co-operate, and to which the council's housing and public health committees would render account?

This principle of consultation with the electorate is one that is vital to any programme adopted by the labour movement for the future of local government. Only in this way will we succeed in making local democratic government live and thrive in every street and village.

Document of the Month

The Moscow Conference

COMMUNIQUE

The Conference of Foreign Secretaries of the U.S.A., Mr. Cordell Hull, of the United Kingdom, Mr. Anthony Eden, and of the Soviet Union, M. V. M. Molotov, took place at Moscow from October 19 to 30, 1943. There were 12 meetings.

In addition to the Foreign Secretaries, the following took part in the Conference:—

For the U.S.A.: Mr. W. Averell Harriman, Ambassador of the United States; Major-General John R. Deane, United States Army; Mr. Green H. Hackworth; Mr. James C. Dunn, and experts.

For the United Kingdom: Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, Ambassador; Mr. William Strang; Lieutenant-General Sir Hastings Ismay, and experts.

For the Soviet Union: Marshal K. E. Voroshilov, Marshal of the Soviet Union; M. A. Y. Vyshinsky; M. M. M. Litvinov, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs; M. V. A. Sergeyev, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Trade; Major-General A. A. Gryzlov, of the General Staff; M. G. F. Saksin, Senior Official for the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and experts.

The agenda included all questions submitted for discussion by the three Governments. Some of the questions called for final decisions, and these were taken. On other questions, after discussion, decisions of principle were taken: these questions were referred for detailed consideration to Commissions specially set up for the purpose, or reserved for treatment through diplomatic channels. Other questions, again, were disposed of by an exchange of views.

The Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union have been in close co-operation in all matters concerning the common war effort. But this is the first time that the Foreign Secretaries of the three Governments have been able to meet together in conference.

In the first place, there were frank and exhaustive discussions of the measures to be taken to shorten the war against Germany and her satellites in Europe. Advantage was taken of the presence of Military Advisers representing the respective Chiefs of Staff, in order to discuss definite military operations with regard to which decisions had been taken and which are already being prepared in order to create a basis for the closest military co-operation in the future between the three countries.

Second only to the importance of hastening the end of the war was the recognition by the three Governments that it was essential in their own national interests and in the interests of all peace-loving nations to continue the present close collaboration and co-operation in the conduct of the war into the period following the end of hostilities, and that only in this way could peace be maintained and the political, economic and social welfare of their peoples fully promoted.

This conviction is expressed in a declaration in which the Chinese Government joined during the Conference, and which was signed by the three Foreign Secretaries and the Chinese Ambassador at Moscow on behalf of their Governments. This declaration published to-day provides for even closer collaboration in the prosecution of the war and in all matters pertaining to the surrender and disarmament of the enemies with which the four countries are respectively at war. It sets forth the principles upon which the four Governments agree that a broad system of international co-operation and security should be based. Provision is made for the inclusion of all other peace-loving nations, great and small, in this system.

The Conference agreed to set up machinery for ensuring the closest co-operation between the three Governments in the examination of European questions arising as the war develops. For this purpose the Conference decided to establish in London a European Advisory Commission to study these questions and to make joint recommendations to the three Governments.

Provision was made for continuing when necessary the tripartite consultations of representatives of the three Governments in the respective capitals through the existing diplomatic channels.

The Conference also agreed to establish an Advisory Council for matters relating to Italy, to be composed in the first instance of representatives of their three Governments and of the French Committee of National Liberation. Provision is made for addition to this Council of Representatives of Greece and Yugoslavia in view of their special interests arising out of aggressions of Fascist Italy upon their territory during the present war. This Council will deal with day-to-day questions other than military preparations, and will make recommendations designed to co-ordinate Allied policy with regard to Italy.

The three Foreign Secretaries considered it appropriate to re-affirm by a declaration published to-day the attitude of the Allied Governments in favour of the restoration of democracy in Italy.

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The three Foreign Secretaries declared it to be the purpose of their Governments to restore the independence of Austria. At the same time they reminded Austria that in the final settlement account will be taken of efforts that Austria may make towards its own liberation. The declaration on Austria is published to-day.

The Foreign Secretaries issued at the Conference a declaration by President Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill and Premier Stalin containing a solemn warning that at the time of granting any armistice to any German Government, those German officers and men and members of the Nazi Party who have had any connection with atrocities and executions in countries overrun by German forces, will be taken back to the countries in which their abominable crimes were committed, to be charged and punished according to the laws of those countries.

In an atmosphere of mutual confidence and understanding which characterised all the work of the Conference, consideration was also given to other important questions. These included not only questions of a current nature but also questions concerning treatment of Hitlerite Germany and its satellites, economic co-operation and assurance of general peace.

DECLARATION OF THE FOUR NATIONS ON GENERAL SECURITY

The Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom the U.S.S.R. and China: united in their determination, in accordance with the declaration by the United Nations of January 1, 1942, and subsequent declarations, to continue hostilities against those Axis Powers with which they respectively are at war until such Powers have laid down their arms on the basis of unconditional surrender; conscious of their responsibility to secure the liberation of themselves and the people allied to them from the menace of aggression; recognising the necessity of ensuring rapid and orderly transit from war to peace and of establishing and maintaning international peace and security with the least diversion of this world's human and economic resources for armaments; jointly declare:—

(1) That their united action, pledged for the prosecution of the war against their respective enemies, will be continued for the organisation and maintenance of peace and security.

(2) That those of them at war with a common enemy will act together in all matters relating to the surrender and disarmament of that enemy.

(3) That they will take all measures deemed by them to be necessary to provide against any violation of the terms imposed on the enemy.

(4) That they recognise the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States and open to membership by all such States, large or small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

(5) That for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security pending the re-establishment of law and order and the inauguration of a system of general security they will consult with each other, and, as occasion requires, with other members of the United Nations, with a view to joint action on behalf of the community of nations.

(6) That after the termination of hostilities they will not employ their military forces within the territories of other States except for the purposes envisaged in this declaration and after joint consultation; and

(7) That they will confer and co-operate with one another and with other members of the United Nations to bring about a practicable general agreement with respect to the regulation of armaments in the post-war period.

DECLARATION ON ITALY

The Foreign Secretaries of the United States, United Kingdom and Soviet Union have established that their three Governments are in complete agreement that Allied policy towards Italy must be based upon the fundamental principle that Fascism and all its evil influence and emanations shall be utterly destroyed, and that the Italian people shall be given every opportunity to establish governmental and other institutions based upon democratic principles.

The Foreign Secretaries of the United States and United Kingdom declare that the action of their Governments from the inception of invasion of Italian territory, in so far as paramount military requirements have permitted, has been based upon this policy.

In furtherance of this policy in the future the Foreign Secretaries of the three Governments are agreed that the following measures are important and should be put into effect:

(1) It is essential that the Italian Government should be made more democratic by the introduction of representatives of those sections of the Italian people who have always opposed Fascism.

(2) Freedom of speech, of religious worship, of political belief, of press and of public meeting shall be restored in full measure to the Italian people, who shall also be entitled to form anti-Fascist political groups.

(3) All institutions and organisations created by the Fascist regime shall be suppressed.

(4) All Fascist or pro-Fascist elements shall be removed from administration and from institutions and organisations of a public character.

(5) All political prisoners of the Fascist regime shall be released and accorded a full amnesty.

(6) Democratic organs of local government shall be created.

(7) Fascist chiefs and army generals known or suspected to be war criminals shall be arrested and handed over to justice.

In making this declaration the three Foreign Secretaries recognise that so long as active military

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operations continue in Italy the time at which it is possible to give full effect to the principles set out above will be determined by the C.-in-C. on the basis of instructions received through the combined Chiefs of Staff. The three Governments parties to this declaration will, at the request of any one of them, consult on this matter.

It is further understood that nothing in this resolution is to operate against the right of the Italian people ultimately to choose their own form of government.

DECLARATION ON AUSTRIA

The Governments of the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States have agreed that Austria, the first free country to fall a victim to Nazi aggression, shall be liberated from German domination.

They regard the annexation imposed upon Austria by Germany's penetration of March 15, 1938, as null and void. They consider themselves as in no way bound by any changes effected in Austria since that date. They declare they wish to see re-established a free and independent Austria, and thereby to open the way for the Austrian people themselves as well as those neighbouring States which will be faced with similar problems, to find that political and economic security which is the only basis for lasting peace.

Austria is reminded, however, that she has a responsibility which she cannot evade for participation in the war on the side of Hitlerite Germany, and that in the final settlement account will inevitably be taken of her own contribution to her liberation.

DECLARATION ON ATROCITIES

The United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union have received from many quarters evidence of atrocities, massacres and cold-blooded mass executions which are being perpetrated by the Hitlerite forces in many of the countries they have overrun and from which they are now being steadily expelled. The brutalities of Hitlerite domination are no new thing, and all people or territories in their grip have suffered from the worst form of government by terror. What is new is that many of these territories are now being redeemed by the advancing armies of the liberating Powers and that, in their desperation, the recoiling Hitlerite Huns are redoubling their ruthless cruelties. This is now evidenced with particular clearness by the monstrous crimes of the Hitlerites on the territory of the Soviet Union which is being liberated from the Hitlerites, and on French and Italian territory.

Accordingly the aforesaid three Allied Powers, speaking in the interests of the 32 United Nations, hereby solemnly declare and give full warning of their declaration as follows: At the time of the granting of any armistice to any Government which may be set up in Germany, those German officers and men and members of the Nazi Party who have been responsible for or have taken a consenting part in the above atrocities, massacres and executions will be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries and of the Free Governments which will be erected therein. Lists will be compiled in all possible detail from all these countries, having regard especially to the invaded parts of the Soviet Union, to Poland and Czechoslovakia, to Yugoslavia and Greece, including Crete and other islands, to Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, France and Italy.

Thus Germans who take part in wholesale shootings of Polish officers or in the execution of French, Dutch, Belgian or Norwegian hostages or of Cretan peasants, or who have shared in the slaughters inflicted on the people of Poland or in the territories of the Soviet Union which are now being swept clear of the enemy, will know that they will be brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the peoples whom they have outraged. Let those who have hitherto not imbrued their hands with innocent blood beware lest they join the ranks of the guilty, for most assuredly the three Allied Powers will pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to the accusers in order that justice may be done.

The above declaration is without prejudice to the case of German criminals, whose offences have no particular geographical location and who will be punished by a joint decision of the Governments of the Allies.

Publications Received

BOOKS

Music and Society by Eric Seigmeister (Workers Music Assoc., 1*s*, 60 pp.).

Memorandum on a National Medical Service (C.P.G.B., 1*s*, 12 pp.).

Food for the People—Target for Tomorrow No. 3 by Sir John Boyd Orr and others (Pilot Press Ltd., 3*s*6*d*, 56 pp.).

The World Today. Food and Farming in Post-War Europe by P. Lamartine Yates and D. Warriner (O.U.P., 3*s*6*d*, 118 pp.).

The Last Days of Sevastopol by Boris Voyetekkov (Cassell & Co., 7*s*6*d*, 150 pp.).

Penguin Special: Argument of Empire by W. K. Hancock (160 pp., 9*d*).

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Book Reviews

Labour Conditions in U.S.A.

A Short History of Labour Conditions in the United States of America, 1789 *to the Present Day* by Jurgen Kuczynski, formerly Statistician, American Federation of Labour (Frederick Muller, 10s6d).

HERE WE have statistics handled as they should be. Instead of the usual abstract and often meaningless treatment, the figures in this book glow from its pages, illuminating a century and a half of class struggle in the United States. Here, in figures of fire, is the record of capitalism.

The author, in some 200 pages of main text, covers the period of primitive exploitation (1789 to 1840) a period of long hours and child labour; the first "Golden Age," 1840 to 1860, when toil was made harder for the workers; the ripe years of American capitalism, 1860 to 1900, with its "colonial labour" and immigration: and the decay of American capitalism, 1900 to 1940, with its vast mass unemployment. In each of these periods, with increasing detail, wages and purchasing power, hours of work and unemployment, productivity and intensity of labour, accidents and health, are clearly displayed in tabular form and the meaning of the changes discussed. It is emphasised that real wages (money wages in relation to the cost of living) whether going up or going down, do not by themselves give a full or true picture of labour conditions—as might be supposed from many writers in the past. For example, in the period 1860 to 1900 other factors in labour conditions mentioned (and often left out of account by other writers) are increased intensity of work, necessitating more or better food for recuperation after toil; increased frequency of accidents; worsening of housing conditions; and other items not included in the cost of living index, such as cost of transport. These weigh down the scales against any advantages gained in a period of increased purchasing power.

How is it that so many books purporting to be a history of labour conditions omit, or underestimate, essential factors brought out clearly and forcibly by Dr. Kuczynski? Undoubtedly, apart from desire to defend the record of the ruling class and apart from other customary infatuations (any aged and solvent merchant at any time will testify how much things have improved since he was a boy) the main reason is to be found in an underlying social theory, which usually derives from nineteenth century Liberal capitalism's praise of itself as a period of general prosperity and progress. Therefore the revelation of the seamy side of the deterioration in the conditions of the workers arouses fury amongst those "Socialists" who find their social theory undermined by books such as this. This, indeed, is one reason why this book is so valuable and should (together with its companion volume reviewed last month) be in the hands of all Marxist students.

In any subsequent edition occasion should be taken to reconsider the statement (on page 65) that by 1900 "the people of the U.S.A. were better served with railroads than any other industrialised country." What about the close network of Belgium or the United Kingdom? And the two statements (pages 84 and 108) on the working day should be brought into line with one another.

R. P. A.

Bomb Phantasy

Is Bombing Decisive? by Captain F. O. Miksche (Allen & Unwin, 5s).

ALTHOUGH EVERY new military operation on the Eastern Front or on the Mediterranean theatre of war proves that air strength is best exploited in close co-ordination with land and sea power, there are still powerful military and political forces, both in this country and the U.S.A., who believe that bombs alone can win the war. Captain F. O. Miksche's book is thus a very valuable and positive contribution to a debate which, in spite of all the available battle experiences of Alexander, Tedder and Montgomery, is going on in Whitehall and Washington. Miksche, who observed while serving with the artillery of the International Brigades and later on with the Republican General Staff, the air experiments of Hitler's Condor Legion, refutes with well-chosen examples the all-out bombing theories of the American major and aircraft-producer Seversky. He proves by ballistic calculations that Seversky's theory of a super-bomber offensive aiming at the total destruction of Germany's industry is both utopian and dilettante.

Miksche's view has been lately confirmed by Harry Hopkins, who stated some weeks ago that, after almost a year of heavy and continuous air raids on Germany, her armament industry is only down by 10 per cent.

In his chapter dealing with the dive bomber, Miksche polemises against Lord Trenchard's strange argument that dive bombers were useless because their attack was not annihilating and because they need fighter protection. "The answer is that few projectiles have even an annihilating effect and if a useful weapon needs protection it must receive it. Artillery, according to Lord Trenchard's logic, would have been declared useless centuries ago because it was always dependent on infantry support and protection." He strongly advocates dive bombers because the method of releasing the bomb from a low altitude while diving on the target limits the extraneous influences on its trajectory, which make high altitude bombing so inaccurate. The sinking of Italy's most modern battleship "Roma" by German dive-bombers on its way to an Allied port proves again the correctness of Miksche's thesis.

This small and very remarkable book will interest layman and expert alike.

H.K.

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A SAILOR APPEALS

"May I appeal to all the Brigadier-Generals, Air Marshals, and Rear-Admirals who must surely learn a great deal of good strategy from LABOUR MONTHLY, to put their shirts or, more properly, stake their commissions, on this very patriotic magazine and SUPPORT IT WITH HARD CASH." So writes one of our most generous supporters, whose hard (and hard-earned) cash arrives with the regularity of clockwork at the beginning of the month, thanks to that excellent and convenient arrangement, a Banker's Draft; so that wherever he may be, we do not miss his donation. Surely, an example to be followed.

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G. Burleigh		3	0
R. Oliver		1	0
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A. and B. Muskett	1	0	0
Red Airman		13	0
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AND ALLIED UNITY

Bryn Roberts

Foreword by Jack Tanner

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